



The House in Bern where the International Postal Union was organized in 1874.

time when our Caledonian ancestors were living on roots and herbs, and clothed in the skins of wild beasts.

People come into contact with the mail-box more generally than with any other part of the postal equipment, and a few figures on this feature of the service may not be out of place. In this particular Germany lead the world with a fair margin. She had 160,981, as against America, 155,304; France, 88,086; Great Britain, 74,209; India, 76,508; Japan, 61,936; Russia, 36,252 and Italy, 43,781.

The German mail-box is painted blue, and bears a large brass frame for carrying a schedule showing the time of collections. These frames were all taken off during the war in order to recover the brass for use in the manufacture of ammunition. They were replaced by a suitable substitute; but the German Government was able thus to secure nearly one hundred tons of this very essential war material.

The money order turnover of the combined countries of the Postal Union amounts to something over seven billion dollars annually on the interior services, the foreign money orders of all countries amounting to about half a billion dollars. Germany's business in this particular, that is, interior orders, runs something over two billion dollars in value in the year, and following her are Russia, with half that amount and France with about one-third.

Worked in Unity During War

Through the formation of this perfectly running, truly world organization, every human being on earth is benefited to the extent of being put in connection, as I have suggested, through the intermediary of the mail-box on the corner, with every other person in the world. And the perfection of the

service in far away India, Japan, or Norway, adds just so much to the significance and the possibilities of that same mail-box on the corner, whether it be in Decorah, Iowa, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Chicago or New York.

How has this interesting institution been functioning during the war? I called at the headquarters in Bern to make some inquiries about this, and met the Vice Director-General of the Union, Mr. Rottner, a German. The Director-in-Chief is a Swiss—an ex-president of the confederation—Mr. Eugène Ruffy. He was ill at the time of my visit. Director Rottner told me that the greatest difficulty confronting the Union during the war, and as a result of the same, was the clearing of accounts due to the fluctuation of international values. The French franc is the standard of exchange for the International Postal Union, and since the war that has varied in value from par to fifty per cent below, making it next to impossible to settle accounts between the nations concerned.

"No government has in any wise carried its belligerency into the administration of the Union," said Director Rottner. "I have worked through the five years of the war, with my French, Belgian and Italian colleagues, in the greatest amity. We locked the doors on the war-spirit in the beginning, and the subject is not discussed here. Indeed, for many months after the conflict broke out, we cleared account between the several warring members of the Union, and the clearance was finally stopped because of the cessation of business between the different countries at war, and the difficulties arising out of the variation of money values. This applied particularly to the international money order payments, the settlement of telegraph accounts between countries where this branch of service is part of the postal business, parcel post accounts, and so on. This clearing-house scheme of the Postal Union is one of the most interesting and promising features of the administration at Bern. It is open to all countries, and with three or four operations we can balance the accounts of a dozen or more different governments. America is not in our liquidation organization. In fact, there are but thirteen countries who are members of this clearing-house arrangement. It would be a great economy to the members of the Union if they were all to accept this service."

Switzerland's Part

In the administration of the International Postal Union, the Swiss Government, through its political or foreign department, enjoys a "mandate," so to speak, from the hundred and forty-two member states, colonies, etc., of the Union. Switzerland appoints and pays the salaries of the staff, which does the work of the institution, pays the running cost and so on, for which it is reimbursed by the various countries according to a classification which has been fixed by the Postal Union treaty. For example, America pays on this account twenty-four times the amount paid by Montenegro—the one being in class 24, the other in class 1.

When one visits Bern the first thing he sees is the range of white snow-capped mountains ninety odd miles away, forming the Bernese Oberland. Nearly all the famous peaks present themselves to view. But in the foreground—a little park above the river encircling the city—is a striking and unusual monument. It is the statue to the International Postal Union. High on a crest of a cloud that rests on the ridge of rock rising from a small artificial lagoon, appears the world which is girdled by female figures, representing the five continents. They are executing a sort of aerial dance, the while passing letters from one to the other. This design is the conception of a French artist, by the name of Saint-Marceaux. It is an ingenious allegory of the ideal which it seeks to typify, an intellectual and spiritual union of the world.

The Cost and Receipts

The foregoing is a survey of the leading, or principal states only. What does this enormous machine cost the people of the world? We must be interested, as the postal facilities of Japan, France or British India are at our disposal, as well as those of New York or Chicago. I will give a brief table of the receipts and expenditures of the post office departments of the several countries mentioned:

	Receipts	Expenditures
America	\$276,289,664	\$271,572,581
Germany	236,501,403	207,714,185
Great Britain.....	120,989,388	87,511,370
France	79,188,673	69,207,095
Russia	66,127,196	44,138,757
Japan	30,318,052	17,353,401
Italy	25,410,087	20,978,218
British India.....	16,049,480	15,277,711

I do not give any figures for Austria-Hungary, as the statistics are separated as to the two parts of the old Austrian Empire, in the report of the Union, and the country hardly exists now as a state. Nevertheless, the combined figures of Austria-Hungary placed the erstwhile Hapsburg monarchy third in the amount of foreign correspondence, and a close fourth to Great Britain in general postal statistics; indicating that the people of that country were great users of the postal service.

No statistics are available for our giant Asiatic friend, China, as she only entered the Union in 1914—a few months before the war commenced. Her performances, however, will be formidable, as the Chinaman was writing and sending letters some thousands of years ago; as indeed they were wearing silks and satins and studying the movements of the stars at a



E. ROTTNER, Vice Director-General

German Likes Post Cards

The fact that the German is the greatest postal card user in the world has caused more than one innocent person to be placed under suspicion during the war, and especially in France; this because he had a correspondent addicted to the postal card habit. I have seen letters from people in that country saying not to send postal cards as the recipient would be suspected of having German connections. This seems absurd; but the statistics here given show to what an enormous extent our German friends save money by using the postal card.

But among the great nations—aside from America, Great Britain, which, of course, includes England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, follows Germany in these postal statistics. France comes next and following France comes, or once came, Russia, as indicated by the statistics of the Union.

Then comes Japan, and Italy, regardless of her D'Annunzios, her Marconis, Lombrosos, and so on, trails along behind Japan.

One observes the figures given for British India with considerable interest. They may be regarded as favorable to the British administration in the service rendered to this London-governed colony, or the contrary, according to the angle from which one looks at the situation. I should say that the extent and use of postal facilities by a people is about as good a gauge for the measurement of that people's intelligence as anything we could find. British India is a close follower of Italy in her postal statistics. She has more post offices than either France, Russia or Italy, and more letter-boxes than any of those countries excepting France. She has more postal employees than either Italy or Japan.

lowing: America, 59,930; Germany, 51,573; Great Britain, 24,589; British India, 19,848; Russia, 18,059; France, 15,391; Italy, 11,363; and Japan, 7,938. (Austria-Hungary had 22,362 post offices before the war.)

It is difficult to comprehend the magnitude of the work accomplished by the organization constituting the International Postal Union, with its million and a half of workers and its quarter million of offices and separate headquarters. They handle, in the course of a twelvemonth, tens of billions of pieces of mail. The statistics of the Union in this respect are not carried out fully, but the total number of pieces of mail of all kinds handled may be estimated as approaching forty billion. The American figures are missing, except for her foreign service, which showed, in 1913, 347,679,892 letters received from abroad, and 384,698,670 letters forwarded. These figures will be insignificant in comparison to our interior service.

Germany either follows or leads us in the extent of her use of the mails. The calculations of the administration of the International Postal Union show that in 1913 her operations extended to the delivery of something over ten billion separate pieces of mail; and to specify, 3,068,792,940 were letters; 1,792,824,100 were postal cards, and 2,394,976,810 were periodicals and newspapers—all interior service. This country is a news agent to the measure of having booked, in 1913, just short of fifty million subscriptions to periodicals of one sort or another, and having delivered on these subscriptions about two and a half billion of such periodicals to the reading public of that country. Her foreign correspondence leads the world, before the war, amounting to 406,387,250 separate pieces of mail received, and 389,243,034 pieces forwarded. It may be presumed, though presumed only, as I am not at all certain of it, that if the American statistics were given fully, they would show us with a fair lead over Germany in everything, except foreign correspondence, newspaper subscriptions, number of letter boxes, and number and amount of money orders handled, which does not, after all, leave a whole lot, it must be admitted.